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TRI STATE LEASING CORPORATION WINS NATIONAL MINE RECLAMATION AWARD

BIG STONE GAP, VA - Tri State Leasing Corporation's Whitley Fork Surface Mine recently received the Interstate Mining Compact Commission's (IMCC) National Reclamation Award, the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) announced today. DMME officials presented a special plaque to company representatives on Wednesday, May 28, 2003, to recognize the achievement of Tri State Leasing and the Whitley Fork Surface Mine employees.

Tri State Leasing Corporation was the contractor on the site permitted to Alliance Coal Corporation. The mine operator is Richard Gilliam. Tri State and Alliance have achieved outstanding reclamation results at this mine site. The permit was issued on September 14, 1998, and annually employed 50-55 people. Coal production during the life of the permit exceeded 1.4 million tons, ranking this mine as one of the top producers in Virginia.

The plaque was presented to Tri State Leasing Corporation president Steven R. Mullins by Roger L. Williams and Ernie Barker, Managers of DMME's Division of Mined Land Reclamation, in a brief ceremony at the mine site. Virginia nominated the mine for the IMCC award as an outstanding example of the economic and environmental benefits of remining. This operation has eliminated over 26,000 linear feet of old highwall and other abandoned mine land (AML) features. The transformation of this area from its pre-mined condition into an aesthetically pleasing and productive piece of property was the direct result of the remining performed by Tri State Leasing, contractor on Alliance Coal Corporation.

As the amount of coal to be mined in Virginia decreases, mining operations that place an emphasis on reining and developing usable land for future generations have become increasingly important. Tri State Leasing and Alliance Coal Corporation demonstrated that previously mined lands can be reined, the environment improved, and usable land created while creating jobs in the community.

The IMCC is a multi-state governmental organization representing the natural resource interests of its 17 member states in Washington, DC. Reclamation awards are presented each year by the IMCC to coal and non-coal mineral mining operations that have demonstrated excellence in reclamation.

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